LOUISIANA TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION FUND

GRANT PROPOSAL

<u>**PROJECT TITLE**</u>

KEEPING OUR BEST & BRIGHTEST:
LAWORKS & WEB-BASED CAMPUS KIOSKS

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KEEPING OUR BEST & BRIGHTEST: LAWORKS & WEB-BASED CAMPUS KIOSKS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Louisiana Department of Labor, in partnership with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and the Louisiana State University (LSU) Offices of Career Services and Computing Services, is requesting funding in the amount of $657,335 for a project intended to make Louisiana's online job search services more accessible to Louisiana's college students in order to keep more of them here after graduation. The project proposes a network of Web-based kiosks to be placed on the technical and community college campuses and on LSU's Baton Rouge campus. The system will be operational by the start of the fall 2002 semester.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Narrative

The proposed project seeks to extend the benefits from an existing technology system to a group of users – college students – not currently utilizing the current, otherwise successful, technological approach. It does this by partnering with educational agencies to place interactive, Web-based kiosks in non-traditional locations to serve populations that can, and should, utilize services already provided by the Louisiana Department of Labor (LDOL). The initial target population are those college students attending the state's technical and community colleges and those attending the Baton Rouge campus of LSU, the state's premier 4-year university. This target population is the very group that, upon graduation, tends to leave the state, thus contributing to the tremendous out-migration problem in Louisiana.

The goals of the project are to:

1. Partner with educational institutions to reach, via innovative methods, an under-served population.
2. Increase the probability of retention of this population within the state of Louisiana by providing increased opportunity to find employment to match their skills by leveraging the use of an already developed electronic service system (www.LAWORKS.net).
3. Gather information that helps the partner agencies understand the needs of the target population, so that the results from expenditure to increase retention of this population in Louisiana can be maximized.
4. Provide maximum availability of essential services to the target population via placement of service access in non-traditional areas using innovative, self-attracting methodology.

Fully interactive, Web-based kiosks will be placed at a total of 47 sites around the state. One kiosk will be placed on each of the technical and community college campuses. Three kiosks will be placed at LSU – one in the CEBA location of the Office of Career Services, one in the Middleton Library Computer Lab, and one in the computer lab of the LSU Student Union. Space, power, and Internet connectivity for the kiosks will be provided by the hosting facilities.

In this way, both the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and LSU's Offices of Career Services and Computing Services are participating as project partners.

Students at the participating colleges will utilize the Web-based, interactive kiosks to access LDOL's online job search services on its LAWORKS.net Web site. Via this site, students will be able to peruse job listings in Louisiana and apply for specific openings online, post résumés, find career and labor market information, and perform occupational skills analysis and matching. By using the kiosks to make students aware of the employment opportunities available in Louisiana and to provide an easy, accessible way for them to apply for those jobs, we anticipate being able to keep more of our "best and brightest" here in Louisiana.

B. Use of Innovative Technology

Kiosk design, implementation, and deployment in the 21st century is very different than envisioned in the early 1990s. Instead of the stand-alone, "clunky" boxes of the 1990s, today's kiosks are Internet-enabled, interactive, remotely-controlled machines that come in a variety of designs. The kiosk of the 21st century complements, rather than competes with, the implementing entity's Web site by expanding its reach and making it more accessible to the public at large. New, remote management tools allow for content management and programming from a central location rather than manually updating each machine.

C. Multi-Agency Application or Portability to Other Agencies

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System, LSU's Office of Career Services, and LSU's Office of Computing Services are participating in this project by agreeing to place the kiosks on their respective campuses and to provide Internet connectivity for the kiosks. Once successfully implemented, the kiosk system may be easily ported to other entities simply by adding additional machines and/or by adding additional services to the content provided via the kiosks.

D. Benchmarking Partners and/or Best Practice References

Several entities in other states and countries have successfully implemented Web-based kiosks to serve targeted audiences. The following implementation examples are similar to the one being proposed by LDOL in that each was used as a mechanism to increase public exposure to job opportunities within a defined geographical area. They are dissimilar in the exact placement of the kiosks and in the exact target audiences.

In cooperation with other partners, Human Resources Development Canada coordinates the use of the Internet, telephone listings, and kiosks to provide access to jobs and work or business opportunities. These kiosks are located at the agency's resource centers, in provincial organizations, and at other public locations. Similarly, the Oregon Employment Department (Oregon's equivalent to LDOL) has touch-screen kiosks located in community colleges, libraries, courthouses, malls, and pharmacies across the state for citizens to use to look for jobs and find helpful information about careers, unemployment, community services and office locations. The contact for Oregon is Mark Perett at (503) 947-1692.

Community colleges in several states have introduced the use of kiosks on campus to provide easy access to information. Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina introduced brightly colored kiosks in the lobby of the student union as an interactive job recruiting tool that uses touch-screen technology. The kiosk deployment is viewed as one piece in a system of approaches to solving the problem of connecting employers and students.

In Minneapolis/St. Paul, the *Star Tribune* introduced a new resource for Twin Cities job seekers - the WorkAvenue Jobview Kiosk System. This system is providing public access to online job listings through freestanding kiosks in area shopping malls, libraries, and job placement centers. Job seekers are able to use the kiosks to view job opportunities, contact hiring companies via email, research companies, and post résumés online.

E. Long-range Planning

The proposed project fits into LDOL's long-range planning in that we are committed to the following goals:

1. making our employment and training services more accessible to our customers
2. increasing awareness of the department and of our services – especially of our online services – among target groups that traditionally have not made use of them
3. using innovative technology to accomplish all of our goals
4. ensuring that Louisiana employers have a competent, diversely skilled workforce available to meet their labor needs (to the extent that we are able to impact this)

The proposed Web-based kiosks will employ the latest, most innovative touch-screen technology; will make our services more accessible; will increase awareness of LDOL and our services among college students; and will keep more of our college graduates in Louisiana by making them aware of, and providing them access to, job opportunities in Louisiana.

F. Performance Goal

The goals of the project are to:

1. Partner with educational institutions to reach, via innovative methods, an under-served population.
2. Increase the probability of retention of this population within the state of Louisiana by providing increased opportunity to find employment to match their skills by leveraging the use of an already developed electronic service system (www.LAWORKS.net).
3. Gather information that helps the partner agencies understand the needs of the target population, so that the results from expenditure to increase retention of this population in Louisiana can be maximized.
4. Provide maximum availability of essential services to the target population via placement of service access in non-traditional areas using innovative, self-attracting methodology.

Performance will be measured by:
   ?? Successful installation of kiosks at each of the designated campuses.

?? An increase in online registrants accessing the services on LAWORKS.net from college campuses.

?? Online surveys of users to gauge the perceived usefulness and effectiveness of the online services being provided.

G. Technical Approach

1. *Technical description*. The proposed kiosk system will provide students an instant means of entering applications and résumés into Louisiana's online job search system (LAWORKS). The students will utilize an Internet-based kiosk platform directly connected to the LAWORKS Web site. Web site access will be limited to the LAWORKS site so that the kiosks will be used exclusively for putting Louisiana employers and graduating students together.

    The system will be able to expand at each college by adding more kiosks as demand from the students and the facilities dictates. Additionally, the system may be expanded to other four-year colleges and to high schools merely by placing kiosks at those sites since each kiosk will be connected to LAWORKS through the Internet.

    One technological alternative considered was to connect to our LAWORKS site utilizing our existing network by placing PCs in the proposed locations. This was not chosen due to the difficulty of managing remote PC terminals not protected by a kiosk-type framework.

    LDOL will contract with an outside vendor for maintenance of the system (on-site troubleshooting and equipment replacement). Upgrading of the system will be handled by LDOL's existing Technical Support staff to the extent possible.

2. *Interoperability*. This system will utilize software to direct the users to the LAWORKS site to control the usage of the kiosk. While the equipment could be quickly configured to freely use all aspects of the Internet, it would be configured for the LAWORKS site only as this is its intended usage.

3. *Scalability*. As described above, since the system will be Internet-based, it will be scalable by adding more units or locations.

4. *Maintaining the System*. Plans for maintaining the proposed system include a maintenance contract with the vendor for the hardware and utilization of LDOL's help desk for the software.

H. Implementation Approach

The implementation approach will be for the vendor to deliver and install the equipment at all sites. No installation action will be required at LDOL's central computer center. However, vendor training of LDOL's help desk staff and software technicians will be required prior to the installations.

The proposed project plan is as follows:

> April 1 – July 5: Acquisition process to purchase equipment and software
> July 8 – August 2: Delivery and installation of kiosks at all sites
> August 5 – August 9: Remote and on-site testing of kiosks
> August 12: System fully operational

I. Assessment of Risks

The proposed project has a high probability of technological success due to the fact that the technology being used is mature, but combined in an innovative way to better meet the needs of the target population. The kiosk technology, the World Wide Web technology, and the communication technologies used in this project are standard off-the-shelf technologies; thus, there is little risk of technological system failure.

The risk of obsolescence is mitigated by the nature of the technology used. The Internet-based kiosk is used as another, targeted channel to direct an ongoing, well-maintained product to the population of interest. The LAWORKS Web site is the primary means of electronic delivery of the services LDOL provides. As such, the Web site is maintained and changed on a daily basis to reflect necessary interactive product and information changes as they occur. The very nature of the Web site is to be the most up-to-date, accurate source of information and services from LDOL. By utilizing the LAWORKS site as the interface, the kiosks will not become obsolete within the lifetime of the equipment.

The risk of staff being affected and the ongoing operational challenges are met by the partner institutions' provision of space, connections, power, and security for the kiosks, so that risks inherent in free-standing installations such as those proposed are considerably reduced from what they would otherwise be. The risk of non-support is met by a contract for maintenance of the Web-based kiosks as part of this proposal.

J. Integration with Existing Technologies

LDOL has had an active electronic service delivery development program for over four years. During this time, great strides have been taken in enabling those that use the services of LDOL to access them via the World Wide Web. Currently, over 40,000 users access the electronic services available on the LAWORKS site each <u>week</u>, producing over 11,000,000 weekly hits on the site.

The proposed project would build on the success of this ongoing effort by providing access to already existing technology in areas and with methods that are not currently being utilized. This is a very cost-effective approach in that very little new software or operating system changes will have to be developed.

K. Project Budget and Costs

1. *Equipment.*

> Internet Kiosk Platform - 47 Internet kiosk platform computers to be installed at each of Louisiana's technical and community college campuses and at LSU's Baton Rouge campus. Each computer unit will cost $12,000.
> Cost Summary:
>
> | Item | Quantity | Unit Price | Total |
> |------|----------|------------|-------|
> | Internet kiosk platform | 47 | $12,000 | $564,000 |

2. *Software.*

> Software fees, except as noted below, are included in the equipment cost. Internet connection manager software is required on each unit at a cost of $40 each. Remote computer control software is required on each unit at a cost of $180 each.
> Cost Summary:
>
> | Item | Quantity | Unit Price | Total |
> |------|----------|------------|-------|
> | Internet connection mgr. | 47 | $40 | $1,880 |
> | Remote computer control | 47 | $180 | $8,460 |

3. *Telecommunications.*

> Each site would require Internet connectivity/data lines as well as an Internet service provider at a cost of $10 per month. The sites are providing the connectivity at a one-time cost of $500 per kiosk.
> Cost Summary:
>
> | Item | Quantity | Unit Price | Total |
> |------|----------|------------|-------|
> | Internet service | 47 | $10/mo. | $11,280 |
> | Internet connectivity | 47 | $500 | $23,500 |

4. *Professional services.*

> Each site would be installed by the vendor at a cost of $165 unit. Initial software/interface design will be done by the vendor at a cost of $95/hour.
> Cost Summary:
>
> | Item | Quantity | Unit Price | Total |
> |------|----------|------------|-------|
> | Installation | 47 | $165 | $7,755 |
> | Software/interface design | 40 hours | $95 | $3,800 |

5. *Other.*

> During the first two years, the maintenance cost will be included in the project. The cost of maintenance will be incurred on a per-call hourly basis. In this project, we are budgeting 752 hours over a two-year period at a cost of $95 per hour.
> Cost Summary:
>
> | Item | Quantity | Unit Price | Total |
> |------|----------|------------|-------|
> | Hourly repair | 752 hours | $95 | $71,440 |

Funding Requested

Other Sources: The partner agencies (LCTCS and LSU's Offices of Career Services and Computing Services) will fund the $34,780 Internet connectivity and Internet service provider charges as an in-kind contribution.

Funding Category	Total Cost	Other Sources	Funding Requested
Equipment	$564,000	0	$564,000
Software	$10,340	0	$10,340
Telecommunications	$34,780	$34,780	$0
Professional services	$11,555	0	$11,555
Other	$71,440	0	$71,440
Total:	**$692,115**	**$34,780**	**$657,335**

Cost/Benefit Analysis

This project will extend a proven, interactive, Web-enabled information system to an under-served population in an environment conducive to the targeting of potentially viable employees. The rapidly expanding body of students in the LCTCS body and the substantial audience on LSU's Baton Rouge campus provide a rich source of employment prospects for Louisiana employers. Disseminating employment information to this market through an innovative, aesthetically enticing delivery mechanism will enable us to stem the outflow of valuable human resources. On the average, a college graduate employed full-time in Louisiana will directly generate in excess of $3000 in tax revenue in the first 12 months of employment. When taking into account the multiplier effect of indirect taxation and economic stimulus, the potential return on this investment will be substantial.

ATTACHMENT I - FISCAL NOTE

Expenditure Increase (Decrease)			
STATE COSTS	**2002-03**	**2003-04**	**2004-05**
Software	10,340	0	0
Telecommunications	29,140	5640	5640
Professional Services	11,555	0	0
Other Charges	35,720	35,720	35,720
Equipment	564,000	0	0
Total State Exp.	650,755	41,360	41,360

MEANS OF FINANCING FOR ABOVE EXPENDITURES

FISCAL YEAR	STATE GEN. FUND	AGENCY SELF GENERATED	LTIF GRANT	FEDERAL FUNDS	IN KIND CONTRIB.
2002-03			621,615		29,140
2003-04			35,720		5640
2004-05				35,720	5640

Narrative Explanation of Expenditure Impact

Expenditure of federal funds for maintenance costs in year three may be offset by a reduction in outreach expense for this market.

February 21, 2002

Louisiana Technology Innovations Council
c/o Mr. Chad McGee, Chairman
Division of Administration
Office of Information Technology
P.O. Box 94095
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095

RE: Louisiana Technology Innovations Fund Application Partnership

Dear Mr. McGee:

The Louisiana Department of Labor (LDOL), the Louisiana Technical and Community College System (LCTCS), and Louisiana State University (LSU) have as a common goal keeping more of our best and brightest students here in Louisiana after graduation. We believe that LDOL's application for funding of a network of kiosks to be placed on technical college, community college, and university campuses is a significant step in working to achieve that goal. Having the kiosks available on the campuses in places easily accessible and highly visible to students will greatly increase the students' exposure to job openings here in Louisiana, presenting greater incentive to remain in our state to start their careers. To that end, we, the undersigned, have agreed to a strategic partnership regarding placement of the proposed kiosks.

LDOL will be responsible for the kiosk content and for the kiosks themselves. LCTCS and LSU's Office of Career Services and Office of Computing Services agree to provide space for the kiosks on their respective campuses as specified in the grant application and to provide Internet connectivity.

We are excited about this innovative technology partnership and have high hopes for the benefits it will bring to our state in the form of reduced out-migration of our state's college graduates.

Cordially,

_____   _____
Garey Forster, Secretary of Labor   Walter Bumphus, PhD., LCTCS President

_____   _____
Mary Feduccia, Director, LSU Career Svcs.   Ron Hay, Director, LSU Computing Svcs.